

**SOUTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Newell School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2004-2005**

Team Members: Barb Boltjes, Team Leader, Rita Pettigrew, Education Specialist, Dave Halverson, Transition Specialist and Julie Carpenter, Special Education Program.

Dates of On Site Visit: October 20 and 21, 2004

Date of Report: October 21, 2004

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision
--

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Newell school district comprehensive special education plan

- Special education referral and tracking forms
- Screening data
- State data on test participation, suspension, personnel
- NCLB report
- Parent, student and administrator surveys

Meets requirements

The steering committee reports the district uses an effective pre-referral and referral system, refers to the comprehensive plan and IEP's uses data to make decisions on progress toward the state's performance goals. In regard to suspension and expulsion rates, the steering committee reports indicate no disabled students were suspended or expelled for more than ten days.

Needs improvement

The steering committee indicated a need to provide training for regular educators and paraprofessionals, as well as parents in trainings relevant to special education.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Supervision as meeting the requirements.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with the steering committee data for Principle One, General Supervision as needing improvements. Through interviews with school staff and administrators, the monitoring team noted a need for professional development for regular educators, parents and paraprofessionals.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- South Dakota department of education data
- Student file reviews
- Personnel development information

Promising practice

The steering committee restated the district has not suspended or expelled for more than 10 days any student with a disability. The district develops a behavior plan based on individual need.

Meets requirements

The steering committee reported the provision of a free appropriate public education for all children.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees the district has not suspended or expelled for more than ten days any student with a disability. The district develops a behavior plan based on individual need. This is a requirement under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Student file reviews
- Comprehensive special education plan for district

Needs improvement

The steering committee noted missing documentation from files of transfer student and missing documentation of parental input.

Out of compliance

The steering committee stated functional assessment and transition assessment were not included on prior notice statements. The steering committee reported student files do not include written reports in the area of functional assessment. The steering committee reported parent surveys indicate a lack of understanding and missing information on five of seven multidisciplinary team report forms for students with learning disabilities. The missing data was in the area of functional assessment.

Validation Results

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with areas identified as needing improvement with the exception of issues identified under “Out of Compliance”. Through file reviews and interviews, the monitoring team noted parental input into the evaluation process was not consistently documented.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:22:03 Certified Child

A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child’s disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3-21 inclusive, and to only those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

A student listed on the child count as mentally retarded must be evaluated in the area of adaptive behavior to determine eligibility under Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and to determine progress and the need for adult services. No adaptive behavior measure was completed in the most recent evaluation.

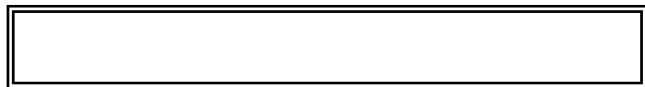
ARSD 24:05:04.02 Determination of needed evaluation data

As part of an initial or reevaluation, the individual education program team and other individuals with knowledge and skills necessary to interpret evaluation data, determine what evaluation data is needed to support eligibility and the child's special education needs. Through interviews and file reviews the monitoring team determined parental input into the evaluation process is not consistently completed prior to the completion of the prior notice. Through file reviews and interviews, the monitoring team noted special education teachers telephone parents and discuss upcoming evaluations; however, the information was not included in the student file.

ARSD 24:05:25:04 Evaluation procedures

The evaluation team must consider a variety of assessment tools and strategies to gather relevant functional and developmental information about the child, including information provided by the parents.

Through the review of twenty student records, the monitoring team found the district staff did not consistently complete functional assessment during the 25 day evaluation timeline and the information was not used to develop present levels of performance. During interviews, special education staff reported a lack of understanding concerning gathering and reporting functional assessment. As a result the students' present levels of performance, annual goals and short term instructional objectives did not link to evaluation.



Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File reviews
- Parent rights booklet
- Comprehensive plan

Promising practice

The steering committee noted the district has not had a due process hearing within the last six years. The district prefers to work with parents to resolve issues where parties disagree.

Meets requirements

The steering committee stated parents were provided with the parent rights booklet in accordance with regulation and district policy 100% of the time. The steering committee noted parents have been fully informed in their native language or another mode of communication of all information relevant to the activity for which consent is sought and a surrogate parent is appointed if no parent can be identified. Parents of children in need of special education and related services are afforded the opportunity to inspect and review all educational records concerning the identification, evaluation and educational placement of the child and the provision of a free appropriate public education. The steering committee reported no complaints have been filed against the district.

Validation Results**Meets requirements**

Through the review of data tables and staff interviews, the monitoring team found the district has not had a due process hearing within the last six years. The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements for procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive

Meets requirements

The steering committee reports policies and procedures are in place to ensure an IEP is developed and in effect for each eligible student.

Needs improvement

The steering committee indicated the need to include transition statements on prior notices and communicate clearly to parents, as well as include agencies for students in transition. The steering committee noted regular education teachers do not always attend IEP meetings. Written input is sought from each regular educator and shared at the IEP meeting.

Out of compliance

The steering committee indicated present levels of performance need to address functional assessment results and transition results. The location of related services and person responsible for annual goals and objectives needs to be documented on the IEP. Progress reports are used but not consistently.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with areas identified as meeting the requirements for the development of an IEP as concluded by the steering committee.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees with areas identified as needing improvement. Transition information was not documented on the prior notice in files of student 14 and older.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:27:01.01 IEP team

Each school district shall ensure that the IEP team for each student with disabilities includes the following members:

- Parents of the student
- At least one regular education teacher of the student
- At least one special education teacher of the student
- A representative of the school district who:
 1. Is qualified to provide, or supervise the provision of, specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of students with disabilities;
 2. Is knowledgeable about the general curriculum; and
 3. Is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school district;
- An individual who can interpret the instructional implications of evaluation results,
- Other individuals who have knowledge or special expertise regarding the student including related services personnel as appropriate;
- If appropriate, the student; and
- Transition services participants.

Through the review of twenty files, the monitoring team determined team membership did not include the appropriate team members. Administrators did not consistently attend, regular education teachers at the middle school and high school level did not consistently attend and agency representatives did not attend IEP meetings; there was not information available in the student file to indicate the district obtained information from the agency to share at the IEP meeting.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03 Content of IEP

Functional assessment and transition information must be used to develop the present levels of performance and must be linked to the annual goals and short term objectives. The location of the related services and the person responsible for providing special education and related services were not documented on the student IEP.

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific

areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Surveys
- File reviews
- Data provided by the state of South Dakota

Promising practice

The steering committee reports children receive services in the regular education classroom.

Validation Results

Promising practice

Although the steering committee did not identify the district's preschool as a promising practice, the monitoring team noted it through interviews and a tour of the school. The preschool program is open to all children ages four through five. Children who are three years old and have developmental delays have the opportunity to participate in this group if appropriate. There is one certified early childhood teacher and paraprofessional in the classroom. Special education services are provided as appropriate from the child's individual education team. The monitoring team observed this program and interviewed district staff that reported the program to be an effective tool in providing appropriate developmental opportunities, as well as a tool for remediating potential areas of concern and early identification of students with special needs.

Meets requirements

Through files review, staff interviews and observation, the monitoring team noted students with disabilities participate with non-disabled children in the general classroom and in extracurricular and non-academic activities. This is a requirement of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.